BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Aquaculture

- **Fish farmers in BC earned revenues of $232 million during 1997, accounting for more than half of total Canadian sales ($460 million).** BC and New Brunswick, where sales reached $161 million in 1997, are the dominant forces in Canada's fish farming industry. Together, the two provinces accounted for more than 85% of total Canadian revenues from aquaculture in 1997. Fish farms exist in every part of the country, although only a handful of fish farms are in operation on the the Prairies. BC, New Brunswick, and PEI, where there is a significant mussel and shellfish industry, are the main fish farming provinces.

  Nationwide, there were about 600 fish farming operations. Salmon was the most important farmed fish product, although both finfish and shellfish are produced in Canada.

  Fish farming revenues in 1997 were hampered by lower product prices, while high expansion costs boosted expenses in the industry. As a result, BC fish farm operations registered losses in 1997, with expenses ($249 million) higher than the industry's total revenues. Feed, vaccines, drugs, pesticides and other "therapeutants" together comprise almost 30% or $72 million of total expenses. Salaries and benefits accounted for another $34 million, while processing services cost fish farmers $28 million. *Source: SC, The Daily*

Migration

- **During the fourth quarter of 1998, BC gained a total of 1,638 persons as a result of net migration from all sources.** This compares to an increase of 7,814 in the fourth quarter of 1997. The net inflow of people from other countries (5,715) in the last quarter of the year offset a net outflow of people from BC to other provinces (4,077). *Source: BC STATS*

- **Annual net migration to BC for 1998 was 9,409 persons,** with a net inflow of 28,168 persons from international sources and a net interprovincial outflow of 18,759 persons. Alberta was the main destination in 1998, as 20,553 more people migrated from BC to Alberta than the reverse direction.

  Source: BC STATS

Tourism

- **Tourism room revenue in BC advanced 2.4% (seasonally adjusted) in December, the first monthly increase since September.** Among the regions, Mainland/Southwest (+3.4%) and Thompson-Okanagan (+2.9%) posted above average growth. Revenue advanced 1.0% in Vancouver Island/Coast, the fifth consecutive monthly increase. While the Royal British Columbia Museum's *Leonardo* exhibit has boosted revenue in Victoria, other parts of the region have also performed well. Northeast (-5.1%) and Nechako (-1.4%) continued to register weak tourism revenue.

  Source: BC STATS

- **Tourism expenditures in Canada grew by 3.9% (at annual rates, adjusted for seasonality and inflation) in the fourth quarter of 1998.** The growth in expenditures came from strong increases from foreign visitors (+11.3%), especially travellers from the United States, as spending by Canadian tourists within the country increased only marginally (+0.8%). *Source: SC, The Daily*

Report **BC's agriculture industry–from dairy farming to ginseng**

Did you know...

The value of counterfeit notes circulated in Canada last year doubled, largely due to a flood of counterfeit $100 bills, believed to have come from a single source. More than $5,000,000 of counterfeit notes were circulated last year, about half of them phony $100 bills.

Sex Offenders

- **Canadians reported fewer incidents of sexual offences to the police in 1997 than in the previous year.** There were 30,735 offences reported in 1997, giving the country a sex offence rate of 86 offences for every 100,000 people. This rate has been declining since 1993, when it peaked at 135. Prior to that, the offence rate had been rising steadily following the passage of new legislation in 1983.

  Children are most at risk of being victimized. A 1997 survey indicated that 62% of reported offences involved victims who were less than 18 years old, and in 30% of the cases, the victim was under the age of 12. Overall, victims were much more likely to be female (82%) than male (18%), but among the very young (less than 12 years old), males were much more likely to be the subject of a sexual assault, accounting for 31% of all reported incidents. *Source: SC, The Daily*

- **One in ten violent offences reported to the police during 1997 were of a sexual nature.** However, it is believed that the actual incidence of these offences may be higher. Victimization surveys suggest that as many as 90% of sex offences are never reported to the police. (All types of sexual offences are considered violent crimes, whether or not the victim was injured during the incident.)
  Source: SC, The Daily

- **Only 38% of people found guilty of violent crimes went to prison in 1997.** Sex offenders, however, were much more likely to spend time behind bars following a conviction. In 1997/98, more than half (57%) of the people convicted of sex offences received a prison sentence. Sex offenders were also locked away longer than other perpetrators of violent crimes. About 37% of terms exceeded a year, compared to 14% for all violent offenders.
  Source: SC, The Daily

Infectious Diseases

- **Infectious diseases are the fourth leading cause of death in British Columbia.** Between 1990 and 1997, infectious diseases claimed the lives of 13,398 British Columbians. In 1997, there were 1,723 deaths directly attributed to an infectious disease. Two-thirds (1,247) of these deaths were caused by various types of pneumonia. AIDS and HIV infections had the second-highest toll, with 112 deaths directly attributed to this cause in 1997. Deaths directly due to AIDS/HIV have declined significantly since 1994, when they peaked at 330.

  Four British Columbians died as a result of contracting Creutzfeld-Jacob (mad cow) disease. Since the beginning of the decade, the disease has claimed the lives of 25 BC residents. Elderly people appear to be most at risk. Of the 25 deaths directly attributed to Creutzfeld-Jacob, 20 involved people over the age of 60. In addition, 6 people who died of other causes were also infected with the disease.

  Necrotizing fasciitis (flesh-eating disease) resulted in 8 deaths in 1997, the highest level this decade. Twenty British Columbians have lost their lives due to this disease since 1990.
  Source: Vital Statistics Quarterly Digest, Vital Statistics Agency

Nunavut

- **On April 1, 1999, Nunavut became Canada's newest territory.** The territory covers two million square kilometres, one-fifth the land area of Canada. The population of Nunavut was estimated at 26,800 people on January 1, 1999, or 40% of the combined Northwest and Nunavut territories. More than half of Nunavut's population is under the age of 25. *Source: SC, The Daily*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

April 1, 1999

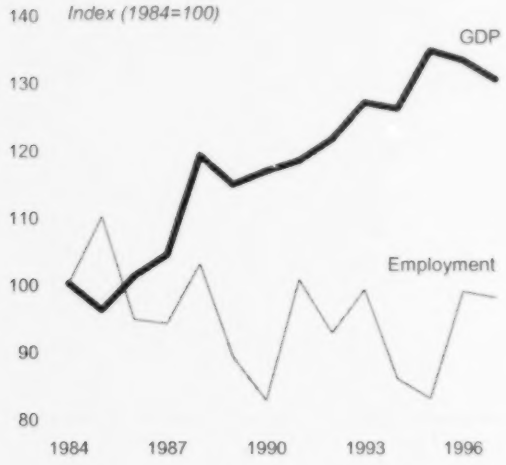
Infoline Report:

BC's Agriculture Industry – From Dairy Farming to Ginseng

Contact: Lillian Hallin / (250) 387-0366

Originally published in February 1999 issue, *Business Indicators*. Annual subscription: $60 + GST

Productivity gains in the agriculture industry have boosted GDP growth even though the number of jobs in the industry has not increased

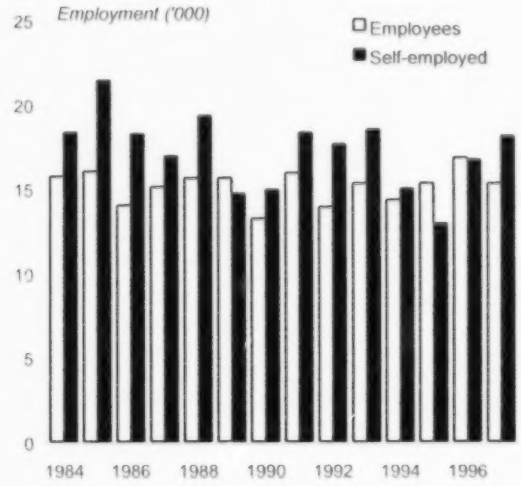


Farming activities contributed $851 million (1992 dollars) to the province's gross domestic product, accounting for 1.0% of British Columbia's total GDP in 1997. A labour intensive industry, agriculture employs almost twice that share (1.8%, or 33,300 people) of the BC work force. Despite a reliance on labour inputs, farming operations have made productivity gains during the last decade-and-a-half, and the industry's GDP has expanded by almost a third during a period when there has been little or no employment growth in the sector.

About three percent of British Columbia's 95 million hectares of land and freshwater area is considered arable or potentially arable. Farm holdings in the province (21,835 farms according to the 1996 Census) cover 2.5 million hectares, of which 566,000 are in crops and 1.41 million are for pasture or grazing. In addition, an estimated 10 million hectares (8.5 million of which are Crown Land) are classified as open or forested grazing land used by the ranching industry. The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) has set aside slightly more than 4.7 million hectares of land to be maintained for agricultural and related purposes.

Agriculture is a relatively small industry in British Columbia, with just under two percent of the province's workforce employed at farms, greenhouses, nurseries and other horticultural operations, as well as in veterinary offices, hatcheries, grooming, and other agriculture-related services during 1997. More than half (54%) of these workers were self-employed, and most of them worked without any paid help.

One in two farm workers in BC is self-employed



Census data indicate that the average farm in the province had an area of 116 hectares in 1996. However, farm size varies greatly depending on the type of activity, from thousands of hectares in grain farming or ranching operations to less than five hectares in

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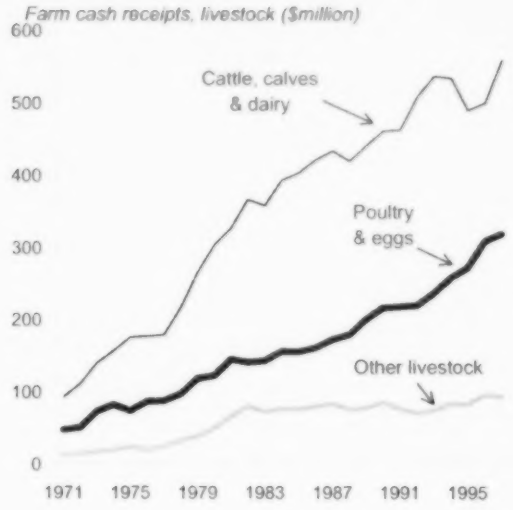
mushroom, greenhouse and poultry businesses, where most of the investment is in structures rather than land.

Sales of livestock account for more than half of all farm cash receipts in British Columbia



Livestock production dominates...

More than half (55%) of the cash receipts of British Columbia farmers come from sales of livestock (cattle, hogs, poultry, eggs, dairy products, honey, fur and other livestock products), which reached just under $1 billion ($964.5 million) in 1997. Livestock production is dominated by the cattle and dairy industry, which had total receipts of $557.2 million. Cattle ranching is carried out primarily on range lands of the southern and central Interior, the Peace River district, and the Kootenays. Large diary herds are concentrated in the Lower Mainland, southeastern Vancouver Island and the Okanagan-Shuswap area, with smaller concentrations found near Creston, Smithers, Vanderhoof, Prince George, Dawson Creek and Fort St John.

During the last 20 years, there has been a gradual decrease in red meat consumption, and poultry and hog producers have made gains as consumer preferences have shifted away from beef to poultry and other white meat products. Hog and poultry production in British Columbia is concentrated near Greater Vancouver and Victoria, although most population centres support these activities.

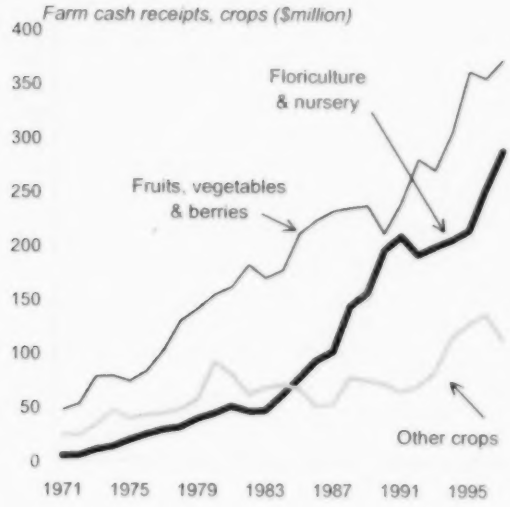
...but BC farmers produce a wide variety of crops

A range of climatic conditions in the province make it possible for British Columbia farmers to grow a wide variety of crops. Southern Interior valleys, principally the Okanagan, are well suited for the production of tree fruits and grapes. The cooler, wetter climate of the lower Fraser Valley and Southern Vancouver Island favours the production of berry crops and vegetables. Greenhouse crops, nursery products, mushrooms and other specialty products are also concentrated in the southwestern corner of the province. Most of the province's grain, oilseed and forage crops are grown in the Peace River District.

British Columbia's crop farming industry has seen some major changes during the last three decades. It is no longer dominated by tree fruits, which accounted for just under a quarter (23%) of all crop receipts in 1971, but only 8.2% of the $772.8 million in crop receipts of British Columbia farmers in 1997. The declining importance of tree fruits in British Columbia's agriculture industry is the result of a combination of factors: the value of tree fruit production has increased at a slower pace than most other crops, while at the same time, some types of crops have seen phenomenal growth. Floriculture and nursery producers, for example, have increased their sales from just $3.5 million in 1971 to $287.7 million in 1997. British Columbia is now the second-largest producer in the country, after Ontario ($509.3 million), with about a quarter of the total value of Canada's floral and nursery products originating in this province. In addition, BC farmers have branched out into the production of new crops such as

ginseng, a product that is in high demand in some parts of the world. During the last ten years, the value of ginseng production in the province has risen from $400,000 to $24.9 million. Farmers in the province now produce about two-thirds as much ginseng as Ontario ($38.2 million), which has been growing this product since 1980 and is the only other ginseng producing area in Canada.

Floriculture and nursery products are becoming a leading source of crop receipts in the province



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Infoline

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jan 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,021.4	0.7
Canada	30,418.1	0.9
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	1997	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,340	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jan	2,912	7.0
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jan	2,098	11.9
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jan	2,773	-2.6
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - 1992=100)	Feb '99	% change on one year ago
BC	110.1	0.5
Canada	109.1	0.7
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	Feb '99	% change on one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,104	3.8
Employed - BC	1,934	5.7
Unemployed - BC	170	-14.2
		Feb '98
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.1	9.8
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.8	8.6
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Mar 24/99	Mar 25/98
Prime Business Rate	6.75	6.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.60	6.40
- 5 year	7.15	6.85
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Mar 24/99	Mar 25/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.5039	1.4100
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6633	0.7093
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jan '99	% change on one year ago
BC	615.81	1.0
Canada	604.55	-0.1

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Statistics Canada

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

Released this week by BC STATS

- Migration Highlights, Fourth Quarter 1998
- Tourism Room Revenue, December 1999
- Exports, January 1999

Next week

- No subscription releases

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